Companion Booklet to the YouTube Playlist

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Imprint

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This companion booklet complements the playlist »Ebi's Journey« and the books »Mut zum Menschsein« and »Courage to be Human«.

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Welcome

A Journey with Music, Thoughts, and Questions

It is wonderful to have you here.

Perhaps you discovered my playlist Ebi's Journey first. Perhaps you came here through my book Mut zum Menschsein or its English edition Courage to be Human. Or maybe it was just a single song or an accidental click.

However our paths have crossed – I am truly glad that we are walking a stretch of the way together.

Music has accompanied me for as long as I can remember. Some songs remind me of specific people. Others of certain chapters in my life. Still others have carried me through difficult times or helped me organize thoughts for which I could find no words of my own.

As I began writing Mut zum Menschsein / Courage to be Human, it gradually became clear to me that many of the book's core themes had already been echoing in my favorite music for years: freedom, responsibility, doubt, hope, humanity, the longing for meaning, the search for God – and the beauty of life, alongside its fragility.

Thus, the idea for Ebi's Journey was born. This playlist is far more than just a collection of my favorite songs. It tells the story of an inner journey. It is not a perfect life story or a finished path of faith. Rather, it is an invitation to ask questions together, to discover new things, and to give space to your own reflections.

Three Paths – One Shared Idea

This companion booklet belongs together with the playlist Ebi's Journey and my books Mut zum Menschsein and Courage to be Human. All three represent the exact same core idea, though not every medium can express everything equally well.

A book offers space for deep thoughts and connections. Music often reaches the heart directly, speaking to emotions where words sometimes fall short. This booklet bridges both worlds. It does not explain the songs –

because good music needs no explanation. Instead, it shares why these specific tracks became part of my personal journey and what reflections I associate with them. Perhaps you will hear some pieces entirely differently than I do. In fact, that is my hope. Because music thrives on the unique experiences each listener brings to it.

An Invitation

You don't need to have read my book, nor do you need to know every song. Perhaps you will listen to the playlist in order. Perhaps you will skip to individual songs. Perhaps you will read the booklet first and listen to the music later. Or maybe you will do the exact opposite. There is no wrong way.

If this little guide helps you discover a song anew, think a thought a little further, or encounter another person with just a bit more openness, then it has fulfilled its purpose. Because that is ultimately what it is all about: not finding an answer to every single question, but having the courage to be human.

Welcome to Ebi's Journey.

The Search

Almost Everything Begins with a Question

Who am I? Why am I here? What gives my life meaning? Does God exist? And if so – what does that actually mean for my life?

Some people look for quick answers. Others found theirs long ago. I am someone who loves questions. Not because I reject answers, but because I believe that good questions can change our lives. The first songs on this playlist speak of this very search. They do not invite you to adopt ready-made beliefs. They invite you to embark on a path of your own.

Suzanne

Leonard Cohen

If I could choose only a single song to begin this journey, my choice would likely fall on Suzanne. It is one of those songs that eludes any definitive explanation. It speaks of a woman, of Jesus, of longing, and of a mysterious atmosphere that is difficult to put into words. So much remains open – and that is precisely what fascinates me to this day.

I never get the impression that Leonard Cohen wants to prove something to me or impose a message. Instead, he takes me along on a walk where I am allowed to discover for myself what touches me. That is exactly where the strength of this song lies. The truly vital questions of our lives can rarely be answered in a single sentence. They often accompany us for many years. Sometimes it is not the question that changes, but we ourselves – and suddenly we hear the same words with entirely different ears. Perhaps every genuine journey begins right there: with the willingness to engage with something without already knowing the destination.

> *“Not every question needs an immediate answer. Some simply want to be our companion for a while.”*

Tiefsee

Karat

The title of this song says it all. If you only stay on the surface, you discover a lot – but not everything. The truly fascinating things usually lie a bit deeper. This is as true for the ocean as it is for our own lives.

In everyday life, we often just function. We work, take care of our tasks, make decisions, and go about our habits. But at some point, questions surface that can no longer be ignored: What truly sustains me? Why is there suffering? What remains when everything else falls away? Who am I when success, possessions, or health are suddenly no longer a given? Such questions can be uncomfortable. But they often open up a fresh view

of life. My book Courage to be Human also grew out of these very questions. Not because I had found answers to everything, but because I realized how valuable the search itself can be.

> *“Those who are willing to dive deeper often discover not just new answers – but themselves.”*

Questions

Manfred Mann's Earth Band

There are songs that make their theme perfectly clear just by their title. Questions is definitely one of them for me. The song asks questions that humanity has likely pondered for thousands of years: Where do we come from? Where are we going? Is there a purpose behind it all? And what role does each individual play?

What impresses me here is less the hunt for definitive answers and more the courage to speak these questions out loud. In our time, there seems to be a constant expectation to have an opinion on everything. Yet genuine reflection often begins where we are honest enough to admit: 'I don't know.' For me, that is not a sign of weakness, but of honesty.

> *“Perhaps wisdom does not begin with certainty, but with the willingness to keep asking.”*

The Logical Song

Supertramp

As a teenager, I loved this song primarily for its music. It was only many years later that I began listening closely to the lyrics. It tells of how we discover the world as children, full of curiosity. Everything is new. Everything can be questioned. Then, step by step, we learn to be sensible. We learn rules. We learn to think logically. We learn to fulfill

expectations. There is nothing wrong with that; our intellect is a wonderful gift.

And yet, I sometimes wonder if we lose something along the way: wonder, open-mindedness, the ability to ask simple questions. Perhaps a fulfilling life needs both – a clear mind and an open heart. That is why The Logical Song belongs at the beginning of this musical journey for me. Not as a critique of reason, but as a reminder that being human is more than pure logic.

> *"Sometimes we discover the greatest truths not with the head alone, but with a heart that has kept the courage to wonder."*

The first chapter of this journey ends with these songs. Not with a neat answer, but with an invitation not to avoid your own questions and to stay curious. Every journey begins with a first step – and sometimes that first step begins with a single song.

Wonder and Discovery

More Than Words

When you set out to look for something, you sometimes discover something you didn't expect at all. Not one big final answer, but a person. An encounter. A single moment. A melody. Or simply a moment of deep joy that defies explanation.

The older I get, the more I believe that our lives do not just thrive on insights, but just as much on wonder. Wonder keeps our hearts open. It reminds us that not everything can be calculated and that some experiences are greater than our words. The next songs tell of precisely that.

Albatross

Fleetwood Mac

There is music that requires no words at all, and Albatross is one such piece for me. This instrumental track has accompanied me for many years. It possesses an extraordinary calmness. Time almost seems to slow down for a few minutes. When I listen to it, I think of the sea, a wide horizon, seagulls, the wind, and the quiet between the waves.

Perhaps that is why this piece touches me again and again. It demands nothing. It explains nothing. It judges nothing. It simply gifts a moment of stillness. In a world that keeps getting louder, I find that incredibly precious. Sometimes the best thoughts emerge exactly when we stop searching for them.

> *“Not every truth is spoken. Some sound like music.”*

Nights in White Satin

The Moody Blues

There are songs that you feel rather than understand. Nights in White Satin is exactly like that for me. It speaks of longing, of love, of vulnerability – of the experience that emotions are often larger than our language. Everyone likely knows such moments: you want to express something, yet you realize that no phrasing is truly adequate.

Perhaps that is where the unique power of music lies. It can make audible what words can only imperfectly describe. It reminds me that our lives are not entirely explainable either. Not everything needs to be analyzed. Some things are meant to simply touch us.

> *“The heart often understands long before the mind has found the words.”*

Lady in Black

Uriah Heep

When I first heard this song, I was fascinated primarily by its narrative. Today, I hear something else. In the midst of a world full of violence, the narrator encounters a woman who does not respond with bitterness or force. She meets him with calmness. With hope. With humanity. That very attitude is what deeply impresses me.

Our time is often dominated by quick judgments and loud voices. Whoever speaks loudest often seems to be proven right. Lady in Black suggests a different path: not strength through power, but strength through serenity. Perhaps peace begins right there – not first between nations, but between individuals, and sometimes within our own hearts.

> *“Peace rarely begins with grand gestures. Mostly, it begins within a single person.”*

Am Fenster

City (Long Version)

Without this song, my playlist would not be complete. The very first notes of the violin create something that is hard to describe. Am Fenster connects raw power and deep longing in a very unique way. It is full of energy and, at the same time, full of introspection.

One line has stayed with me for years: 'To know just once, this will remain forever.' Is that even possible? I don't know. But that very question moves me. Perhaps we all long for something that lasts. Something that is larger than the fleeting moment. Something that sustains us even when much else fades. For me, this song is a reminder to experience life consciously – not faster, not more, but deeper. With open eyes. With an open heart.

> *“Those who can still wonder have not lost the most important thing.”*

Wonder changes our perspective. It turns an ordinary encounter into something special. It lets us discover beauty where we previously overlooked it. But wonder alone is not enough. Eventually, we face choices – the question of which path we want to choose. For every freedom brings possibilities, and every possibility carries responsibility. With these thoughts, we enter the next stage of our journey.

Freedom and Responsibility

The Gift of Freedom

Freedom is one of the most beautiful and, at the same time, most demanding gifts of our lives. It means being able to make choices, to walk our own paths, and not to be defined by others. Yet freedom is far more than just the option to choose between different alternatives. It also asks how we handle that freedom.

Every decision opens a door while closing others. Our lives are shaped not only by what happens to us, but just as much by what we choose. Perhaps that is part of being human: not being perfect, but acting responsibly with our own freedom. The next songs speak of this freedom in very different ways – of its possibilities, its temptations, and its inherent beauty.

Black Magic Woman

Santana

Some songs are recognizable within the first few seconds, and the opening guitar notes of Black Magic Woman are definitely among them. I have always loved listening to this track; it possesses a captivating blend of rhythm, passion, and musical brilliance. Naturally, the song tells of attraction, of fascination, of a force you can hardly resist.

Yet the longer I reflect on it, the more I see it as a metaphor for many areas of our lives. It is not just people who can hold us spellbound. Power, success, possessions, recognition, or the illusion of finally being happy once we achieve that next goal can do the same. Everyone knows these 'magical' pulls. They aren't inherently bad, but they invite us to look

honestly: What am I aligning my life with? What guides my choices? What truly grants me freedom – and what might be making me quietly dependent? Freedom doesn't mean giving in to every temptation. Freedom means being able to choose consciously.

> *"Not everything that attracts us leads us into freedom."*

Whole Lotta Love

Led Zeppelin

I admit it: as a youth, I probably found different things exciting about this song than I do today. Over the years, my perspective has shifted. I am still thrilled by the incredible energy of this track. But now, I hear something else too.

Love often begins with excitement, a racing heart, butterflies in the stomach, and the feeling that the world cannot harm us. That is wonderful. But anyone who has walked alongside another person for a longer time knows: love does not live on excitement alone. It grows through trust, respect, humor, patience, and sometimes through enduring difficult times together. Perhaps that is the difference between infatuation and love. Infatuation happens to us. Love chooses, again and again. It is not a one-time feeling; it is an attitude. A commitment. Every single day.

> *"Love shows its greatest strength not in easy days, but where people choose to stay for one another."*

Freedom Means More

The longer I think about freedom, the clearer it becomes to me: freedom does not mean doing whatever I want. Rather, freedom means being able to become the person I want to be. That requires courage, sometimes self-criticism, and the willingness to admit mistakes. No one walks their path without detours. No one makes the right choice every time. Perhaps that is

part of our dignity as human beings: that we are allowed to learn, allowed to grow, and that every new day offers the possibility to dare a fresh start.

> *“Freedom is revealed not in making no mistakes, but in the capacity to begin anew time and again.”*

Anyone who takes freedom seriously must also learn to live with uncertainty. Not every decision leads immediately to the goal. Not every hope is fulfilled. Not every answer remains stable. And sometimes, doubts are an essential part of an honest faith and a fulfilling life. Therefore, our journey now takes us further – not away from the questions, but deeper into them. To the place where doubt and hope meet.

Doubt and Hope

The Courage of Not Knowing Everything

For a long time, I thought doubts were something to be overcome as quickly as possible. Today, I see it differently. Anyone who honestly searches for truth will repeatedly run into boundaries. Not every question can be answered. Not every decision feels right immediately. Not every experience makes sense straight away. That is precisely why doubts belong to being human for me. They are not a sign of weakness; often, they show that we take life seriously. The decisive factor is not whether we doubt, but whether we refuse to lose hope despite our doubts.

The next songs tell of exactly that – of people showing vulnerability, of compassion, of the strength of being there for one another, and of the hope that humanity can be stronger than fear and violence.

Brothers in Arms

Dire Straits

There are songs where I automatically turn down the volume around me. Not because they are loud, but because they deserve absolute attention.

Brothers in Arms is one of them. At first glance, it tells of war. Yet the more I listen to it, the more I think of something else: it tells of what war does to human beings – not just on battlefields, but wherever people stop seeing each other as human. Perhaps that is the true tragedy of every conflict: in the end, everyone loses.

I am deeply touched by the thought that on the other side stand no monsters, but human beings – with hopes, families, fears, and stories. This realization doesn't make war any easier to comprehend. But it reminds me of how incredibly precious peace is. Not just between nations, but in our families, our friendships, and our daily interactions.

> *"Humanity begins where we choose to see the human being in the other person first."*

He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother

The Hollies

There are song titles that contain an entire philosophy of life within them: He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother. The song hardly needs to say more than that, because that is exactly what it is about.

No single person can solve all the problems of this world. But every one of us can ease a stretch of the journey for someone else. Sometimes an open ear, an honest conversation, a phone call, a visit, or simply the willingness not to run away is enough. Especially in difficult times, we experience how valuable people are who stay – not because they know all the solutions, but because they are present. Perhaps humanity begins right there.

> *"Shared burdens become lighter. Shared joy becomes greater."*

Bridge Over Troubled Water

Simon & Garfunkel

Every person experiences times when the ground beneath their feet becomes unsteady: illness, grief, disappointment, loneliness, loss. In such moments, we rarely need clever advice. We need people who stay. That is what I think of every time I hear Bridge Over Troubled Water. The song doesn't promise miracles – it promises presence. It reminds us that hope often takes on a face: the face of a person holding our hand, listening, staying silent, walking along. Perhaps that is one of the most beautiful forms of love – not being able to change everything, but being there regardless.

> *"Sometimes the greatest help is not an answer, but a hand that holds us tight."*

Hope Grows Together

Looking back at these three songs, I notice they all point in the same direction. None of them ignores suffering. None claims that life is simple. And yet, none of them ends in hopelessness. Perhaps hope consists precisely in not denying the darkness and still continuing to walk. For me, this is one of the most vital thoughts in my book Courage to be Human. Courage does not mean having no fear. Courage means moving forward despite fear – not alone, but together.

> *"Hope is often not a loud cheer. It is the quiet decision to get up again tomorrow."*

Those who have experienced hope begin to ask anew what truly matters in life: Success? Possessions? Knowledge? Or perhaps something entirely different? With these reflections, the final chapter of our journey begins.

For in the end, every path leads to a simple yet decisive question: How do we want to live with one another?

Living Humanity

What Remains in the End

The longer I have pondered the great questions of life, the simpler one realization became: in the end, it is not just what we know, what we believe, or what we have achieved that counts – but above all, how we have encountered other people. Perhaps this is the most central thought of my book Courage to be Human.

Humanity rarely shows itself in extraordinary moments. It shows itself in everyday life: in a kind word, an open ear, an honest conversation, and the willingness not to judge another prematurely. Perhaps that changes our world more than grand speeches. The final two songs of this playlist remind me of this constantly.

Dust in the Wind

Kansas

This song made me thoughtful the very first time I consciously heard it. It serves as a reminder of how fleeting so much is: possessions, success, career, reputation. Even things that seem incredibly important to us today will eventually lose their meaning. That might sound sad at first. To me, however, it is primarily liberating. Because when so much fades, a new question arises: What remains?

Perhaps it isn't our achievements at all. Perhaps what remains are the traces we leave behind in the lives of others: a kind word, a helping hand, an honest smile, an encounter that gave someone courage. Perhaps the true wealth of our lives lies precisely in that.

> *“Much is fleeting. But the people who have passed on love become unforgettable.”*

Wish You Were Here

Pink Floyd

For me, this playlist could not have found a more fitting conclusion. Wish You Were Here tells of longing, of loss, of genuine closeness – and of the question of whether we sometimes lose sight of what is essential.

How often do we just function? Appointments, work, obligations, to-do lists... and suddenly another week has passed, or a month, or an entire year. This song reminds me that life doesn't begin at some point in the future. It is happening right now. Not tomorrow, not after the next vacation, not when everything has finally become perfect – but today. Perhaps that is the most important reminder music can give us: life doesn't wait. It happens in every single moment.

> *"The most beautiful gift we can give to another person is our true presence."*

The End of a Playlist – and Perhaps the Beginning of a Journey

With the final song, this playlist ends. But perhaps something else begins here. Perhaps you will hear some of these songs differently in the future. Perhaps you will rediscover thoughts that have accompanied you for a long time. Perhaps you will disagree with me in some places. I welcome that too. Because this booklet does not wish to convince anyone. It wants to invite reflection, conversation, wonder, questioning – and perhaps finding the courage to walk your own path consciously.

Afterword

Thank you for accompanying me on this musical journey. Perhaps you already knew many of these songs. Perhaps there was one or two that you discovered anew. Perhaps you shared some of the thoughts. Perhaps you disagreed with others. Both are welcome. Because music thrives on every

person hearing something unique, and good questions thrive on the fact that different answers are possible.

If this companion booklet has made you curious, I am truly glad. Perhaps you would now like to listen to the playlist in full. Perhaps you are also interested in my book Mut zum Menschsein or the English edition Courage to be Human. All three – book, playlist, and companion booklet – belong to Ebi's Journey. They tell the same story in different ways. The book invites deep reflection. The music often directly addresses the heart and emotions. This booklet connects both worlds. None replaces the other, but together they can mutually enrich and complement one another.

Let's Stay in Touch

If Ebi's Journey has accompanied you and you wish to discover more, I would be delighted if we stayed in contact. Through my Linktree, you can find all current information in one single place:

• the YouTube playlist Ebi's Journey

• information about Mut zum Menschsein and Courage to be Human

• my Instagram channel

• further content and future projects

linktr.ee/mjwaldner

Thank you so much for walking a piece of my journey with me. Perhaps we will meet again – in a song, in a thought, or somewhere along the way.

Warmly,
M. J. Waldner

Music can change a moment.
Thoughts can change a life.
Humanity can change the world.